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Message Text

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TO USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS
USLOSACLANT NORVA
USCINCEUR VAIHAIGEN GERMANY
CINCLANT NORVA

S E C R E T STATE 143924

FOLLOWING REPEAT SECSTATE 143924 ACTION USMISSION NATO
MEMBASSY THE HAGUE INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS AMEMBASSY
MADRID 03 JULY 1974. QUOTE:

S E C R E T STATE 143924

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MCAP, NATO, NL
SUBJECT: SECDEF MEETING WITH NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR
VAN LYNDEN, JULY 2

1. NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR VAN LYNDEN MET SECDEF TO DELIVER
AND TO HIGHLIGHT FOLLOWING POINTS CONTAINED IN LETTER FROM
MOD VREDELING:

A. VREDELING'S BASIC PRINCIPLE IS THAT HIS NAME NEVER BE
LENT TO A WEAKENING OF NATO.

B. TO MAINTAIN CURRENT FORCE LEVELS WOULD BE COST PROHIBI-
TIVE; WITHOUT A CAPABILITY TO ACQUIRE NEW EQUIPMENT, DUTCH
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FORCES WOULD BECOME EMPTY SHELL.

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C. DEFENSE PLANS; AS AMENDED IN COURSE OF CONSULTATIONS, PRESENT CREDIBLE, BALANCED CONTRIBUTION TO COMMON DEFENSE AND COMPARE FAVORABLY WITH PLANS OF ALL OTHER ALLIES IN COMBAT VALUE AND IN FINANCIAL TERMS.

D. OVERALL, DPC'S EVALUATION OF DUTCH DEFENSE PLANS DID NOT DO JUSTICE TO PLANS OR TO SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY WERE DEVELOPED.

E. COMPLETELY FALSE INTERPRETATION HAS BEEN ATTACHED TO DUTCH PROPOSALS CONCERNING RATIONALIZATION AND

SPECIALIZATION, WHICH ARE NOT AIMED AT ACHIEVING FORCE REDUCTIONS, BUT AT SOLVING, NOW, PROBLEMS WHICH,IFNOT ATTENDED TO, WILL BECOME INSURMOUNTABLE IN NEXT DECADE.

2. AMBASSADOR VAN LYNDEN CONVEYED TOSECDEFCONCERNS EXPRESSED BY FONMIN VAN DER STOELANDMOD VREDELING THAT AMENDED DUTCH DEFENSE PLANS BE ACCEPTEDIN NATO. PLANS, IN THEIR JUDGMENT, PROVIDE FOR A RESPONSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO ALLIANCE. SPECIFIC MENTION WAS MADEOF PLANSTO INCREASE CAPITAL-EXPENDITURE SHAREOFDEFENSE BUDGET FROM 20 TO 24 PERCENT OVER FIVE-YEAR PERIOD;TO CONTINUE MECHANIZATION OF RESERVE 5TH DIVISION; NOT,REPEATNOT, TO REDUCE PEACETIME STRENGTH OF ARMY ASLONGASMBFR NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE AND HAVE NOT YETREACHED THE DESIRED RESULTS; AND, IN CONSULTATION WITH PARTIESCONCERNED, TO STUDY FURTHER MATTER OF WITHDRAWING HAWKSQUADRONS FROM FRG. VAN LYNDEN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PROVISIONALPLANS SUB-MITTED FOR NATO CONSULTATIONS IN MAYWEREDRAFTED IN HASTE AND CONTAINED SOME WEAKNESSES, BUT THAT THEYDESERVED BETTER TREATMENT THAN THAT ACCORDED THEMINDPC'SREVIEW. IN CONCLUDING, AMBASSADOR NOTEDTHAT IF NATO CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT'S DEFENSE PLANS IS TOO SHARP, SERIOUSCOUNTER-EFFECTS COULD SURFACE IN THE NETHERLANDS. ON THAT BASIS, HE SOLICITED UNITED STATES SUPPORT OF AMENDED PLANS DURING THEIR REVIEW BY DPC.

3. SECDEF NOTED THAT NATO IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY STRONGNOW,
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AND THAT POLITICAL COHESION IS LACKING. THE ALLIANCE'S CHIEF DEFICIENCY, IN FACE OF VAST STRATEGIC CHANGESAND PACT'S STEADY BUILDUP OF CONVENTIONAL AND TACTICALNUCLEAR FORCES, LIES IN RELUCTANCE, BECAUSE OF POLITICAL PRESSURES, TO PROVIDE SAME RESOURCES TO DEFENSE AS AREBEINGAPPLIED EAST OF THE ELBE. SOVIETS DEVOTE 10 TO 12 PERCENT OF THEIR REAL RESOURCES TO DEFENSE; NATO ONCE DEVOTED 5 PERCENT, NOW DEVOTES 4 PERCENT AND SOON WILL DEVOTE 3.5 PERCENT OF

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ITS REAL RESOURCES TO DEFENSE. NET EFFECTISTHAT,GIVEN ARBITRARY LIMITS ON DEFENSE BUDGETS, CONVENTIONAL BALANCE WILL TILT TOWARD WARSAW PACT, AND THIS AT A TIME WHEN WE MUST DEMONSTRATE TO PACT OUR PREPAREDNESS TO MATCH ITS CAPABILITIES. REGRETTABLE TREND OF NATO NATIONSTO ADJUST FORCES DOWNWARD IS BECOMING A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE; GIVEN THAT TREND, WE CANNOT BE SANGUINE ABOUT FUTURE.

4. SECDEF SAID THAT, WHILE AMENDED DEFENSE PLANS WERE NOT AS UNACCEPTABLE AS THOSE ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY THE NETHERLANDS, THEY LEAVE MUCH TO BE DESIRED. WHILE UNITED STATES MAY HAVE TO ACCEPT, WITH REGRETS, DECISIONS GOVERN-MENT OF THE NETHERLANDS FEELS OBLIGED TO MAKE, A REDUCTION IN STRENGTH IS A REDUCTION IN STRENGTH; CAPITAL EXPENDI-

TURES MAY INCREASE, BUT ONLY AT EXPENSE OF INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS IN OTHER AREAS; AND LONG-RUN STAYING POWER OF ALLIANCE WILL BE HARD HIT. THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT L LIKE TO TOLERATE DUTCH REDUCTIONS; IT COULD NOT ENDORSE THEM. IN THIS INSTANCE, AS IN OTHERS INVOLVING FORCE RE-DUCTION PROPOSALS, POLITICAL PRESSURES HAVE FORCED DECISION TO REDUCE; THE NETHERLANDS NOW HOPES THAT BEST POSSIBLE FACE CAN BE PUT ON WHAT IS, AT LEAST IN PART, A FAIT ACCOMPLI.

5. SECDEF RECALLED THAT, FOR PAST YEAR, HIS MESSAGE TO ALLIANCE HAD BEEN THAT WESTERN EUROPE MUST DO MORE IF UNITED STATES IS TO CONTINUE ITS CURRENT COMMITMENT. AMERICAN PUBLIC AND THE CONGRESS ARE AWARE OF VAST IMPOR-TANCE OF DEFENDING WESTERN EUROPE; IF, HOWEVER, THEIR APPRECIATION OF THAT IMPORTANCE IS NOT SHARED BY OUR ALLIES, WE SHALL BE FORCED INTO A REEVALUATION OF OUR COMMITMENT. UNFORTUNATELY, PEACE THAT HAS ENDURED IN

EUROPE SINCE 1945 -- BASED IN PART ON NATO AND IN PART ON UNITED STATES NUCLEAR UMBRELLA -- HAS BEEN ACCEPTED AS A GIVEN, PARTICULARLY BY THE GENERATION WHICH HAS EXPERIENCED NOTHING BUT PEACE. COLLECTIVELY, WE MUST PERSUADE OUR PUBLICS THAT SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE HINGE ON AN EAST-WEST BALANCE OF POWER; OTHERWISE, LITTLE HOPE CAN BE HELD FOR SURVIVAL OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION. IF BALANCE IS MAINTAINED AND STRENGTH OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN NATIONS IS PRESERVED AND ENHANCED, PACT WILL BE DETERRED FROM ATTACK-ING NATO'S CENTER REGION OR ITS FLANKS.

6. CONCERNING STANDARDIZATION, RATIONALIZATION AND SPECIALIZATION, SECDEF NOTED THAT, WHILE SOME GOOD RESULTS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED, 25 YEARS HAVE BEEN SPENT PAYING LIP SERVICE TO A CONCEPT TOWARD WHICH ONLY FEW CONCRETE STEPS

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HAVE BEEN TAKEN. ON BALANCE, NATO NATIONS DEMAND A COLLECTIVE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE WHICH THEY ARE UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO ACHIEVE INDIVIDUALLY. PROGRESS TO DATE HAS BEEN SO SLOW THAT ONE CANNOT RELY ON RATIONALIZATION TO ACHIEVE THOSE ECONOMIES REQUIRED TO REDRESS THE BALANCE.

7. IN COURSE OF DIALOGUE, SECDEF COMMENTED ON FACTS THAT AN ENHANCED NATO DEFENSE POSTURE IS IMPEDED BY POST-WORLD WAR II CONSTRAINTS AND BY IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS. EUROPEANS ARE SUSPICIOUS OF FRG AND FEAR A GREATER PRO-PORTIONAL GERMAN CONTRIBUTION TO ALLIANCE DEFENSE. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, FEARFUL NATIONS ARE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE LESS, THUS INSURING THE GERMAN PREPONDERANCE THEY FEAR. SPAIN COULD ADD CONSIDERABLE STRENGTH TO ALLIANCE, BUT, ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS, NATIONS LEAST WILL-ING TO DEVOTE RESOURCES TO COMMON DEFENSE ARE THOSE MOST

OPPOSED TO SPAIN'S PARTICIPATION.

8. AMBASSADOR VAN LYNDEN ASSURED SECDEF THAT SECRETARY'S VIEWS WOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO HIS GOVERNMENT. HE HOPED THAT SECDEF'S REEVALUATION OF AMENDED DEFENSE PLANS, AS SET FORTH IN MOD VREDELING'S LETTER, WOULD ALTER HIS OPINION OF ORIGINAL PLANS. SECDEF SAID THAT VREDELING'S LETTER WOULD BE STUDIED CAREFULLY AND THAT HE SHARED VAN LYNDEN'S HOPES THAT HIS OPINION OF DUTCH PLANS WOULD BE ALTERED

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FAVORABLY. SECDEF COMMENTED ON EXTREMELY HIGH ESTEEM IN WHICH VREDELING IS HELD, AND ASKED VAN LYNDEN THAT HIS WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS BE CONVEYED TO MOD.

9. TEXT OF VREDELING LETTER BEING TRANSMITTED SEPTEL.

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